

CLAIMS

1. A device for dispensing a bag from a stack of bags, the device comprising:

a plate having a frame;

5 a rotatable shaft coupled to said frame;

at least one roller non-rotatably affixed to said shaft and arranged to engage a bag of the stack of bags; means for rotating said shaft; and

means for automatically stopping rotation of said shaft after a single bag has been dispensed,

10 wherein the stack of bags is held against one side of said plate, and said single bag is dispensed to an opposite side of said plate.

2. The device according to claim 1, wherein said rotatable shaft is mounted on said frame and further comprising a bag retaining element coupled to 15 said plate for pressing the stack of bags against said at least one roller.

3. The device according to claim 1, wherein said rotatable shaft is mounted on a bag retaining element coupled to said plate for pressing the stack of bags against said rollers.

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4. The device according to any of the preceding claims, wherein said means for automatically stopping includes a dispensed bag detector adapted to stop rotation of said shaft in response to detection of a dispensed bag.

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5. The device according to any of the preceding claims, wherein said rotating means includes:

a motor; and

a transmission coupling said motor to said rotatable shaft such that said motor drives said shaft

6. The device of claim 5, and said means for stopping includes a dispensed bag detector coupled to said motor and adapted to stop rotation of said motor in response to detection of a dispensed bag.

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7. The device of any of claims 1-3, wherein said means for rotating includes manual means for rotating said shaft.

8. The device according to claim 7, wherein said manual means is a handle.

9. The device of claim 2, further comprising:

a second rotatable shaft mounted parallel to said rotatable shaft on an extension of said frame;

15 at least one roller non-rotatably affixed to said second shaft;

wherein each roller on said rotatable shaft is coupled to a roller on said second shaft, whereby rotation of said rotatable shaft causes concomitant rotation of said second shaft.

20 10. The device according to claim 2, wherein said bag retaining element includes a bag-retaining bar for engaging and retaining said stack of bags against said at least one roller before and during dispensing.

25 11. The device according to claim 10, wherein said bag-retaining bar is coupled to an arm pivotally coupled to said plate.

12. The device according to any of the preceding claims, further comprising a housing in which the device is mounted, said housing including an opening adjacent said opposite side of the plate for removal of a dispensed bag.

13. The device of claim 12, further comprising a display on the outside of the housing.

5 14. The device of claim 13, wherein said display includes a frame.

15. The device of claim 13, wherein said display includes a light box.

10 16. The device of claim 13, wherein said display includes an electronic display coupled to a controller.

17. The device of claim 16, wherein said controller is coupled to a central store computer.

15 18. The device according to any of the preceding claims, further comprising a controller for controlling said device, and an electronic connection for coupling said controller to a cash register for communication therewith.

20 19. The device according to claim 2, further comprising an elongate guide mounted adjacent said rollers to guide dispensed bags away from the rollers.

20. A method for dispensing a bag from a stack of bags, the method comprising:

25 holding a stack of bags against at least one roller non-rotatably affixed to a rotatable shaft coupled to a plate having a frame;

dispensing one bag from said stack of bags to an opposite side of said plate from said stack of bags by rotating said rotatable shaft; and

automatically stopping rotation of said shaft after dispensing a single bag.

21. The method according to claim 20, wherein said step of automatically stopping includes detecting presence of a bag adjacent a dispensed bag detector; and stopping rotation of said shaft in response thereto.

5 22. The method according to claim 20 or 21, further comprising:
drivingly coupling a motor to said rotatable shaft, such that actuation of said motor causes said rotatable shaft to rotate; and
causing said plurality of rollers to engage an outermost bag in said stack of bags, such that rotation of said rotatable shaft causes said rollers to remove said 10 outermost bag from said stack of bags.

15 23. The method according to claim 22, wherein said step of automatically stopping includes automatically stopping said motor in response to dispensing a single bag from the stack.

24. The method of any of claims 20-23, wherein said step of affixing further includes:

non-rotatably affixing a second plurality of rollers to a second rotatable shaft, mounting said second shaft parallel to said rotatable shaft; and
20 coupling each roller on said rotatable shaft to a roller on said second shaft, whereby rotation of said rotatable shaft causes concomitant rotation of said second shaft.

25. The method of claim 20, further comprising drivingly coupling a manual rotation means to said rotatable shaft, such that actuation of said manual rotation means rotates said shaft.